Syllabus:
TECHNOLOGY AND DEMOCRACY
GEOG 804 (002)  Wednesday 6-8:30 pm  Saunders 219*
Instructor: Scott Kirsch, Department of Geography, Saunders Hall 306
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https://blackboard.unc.edu

Overview
Are society's technological choices open to democratic participation? The graduate seminar and research workshop in TECHNOLOGY AND DEMOCRACY explores political dimensions of technological change. Through readings, seminar discussion, research presentations, and off-campus visits*, we will investigate science and technology as sets of social, cultural, and mechanical relations between nature and societies, and within societies. The goal of the course: to bring together a broad view of democracy – as a society with open and responsive institutions, uncensored education and free information – with an archaic, seventeenth-century view of technology as a specialized treatise on the mechanical arts, or a study of human practices. Or maybe not so archaic. The course is designed to raise questions about how research on human-nature-technology relations – writing technology – can and does contribute to more democratic relations of technology and technological change.

Format:
Experimental. There will be three main components: (1) survey and analysis of key literatures in democratic and political theory, social theory, science & technology studies, and geography. We will try to develop and expand theoretical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of knowledge, technology, and democracy; (2) a ‘futures’ section, which substantively engages with key issues of water, energy, environment and risk; and (3) a research component will include workshops on research practices and methods, interventions, and representational strategies in new media and cartography, and will encourage students to explore connections between course themes and their own research.

Requirements:
Reading and seminar participation 50%
Review project* 25%
Mapping project* 25%

Plan on reading ~100 pp per week for regular seminars.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


MORE KEY TEXTS:


Provisional Schedule and Reading List*

Jan 14  Course introduction – short meeting

Jan 21  Part I: Keywords
Technology and Democracy
Bruno Latour, “From realpolitik to dingpolitik or how to make things public,” Making Things Public (14-41)
Keywords:
• Raymond Williams, “Democracy” Keywords (Oxford University Press, 1983), 93-98.
• Raymond Williams, “Technology” Keywords, 315-316.
• Celia Roberts and Adrian Mackenzie, “Science” New Encyclopedia Project (157-163).
• Shiv Visvanathan, “Alternative science” New Encyclopedia Project (164-169).
• Simon Schaffer, “Seeing Double how to make up a phantom body politic” Making Things Public, 196-202
• Leviathan excerpt, Making Things Public, 246-247

Jan 28  Keywords II: Materialism and The Public Sphere
Langdon Winner, “Citizen virtues in a technological order” in Technology and the Politics of Knowledge (65-84)
Noortje Marres, “Issues spark a public into being: A key but often forgotten point of the Lippmann-Dewey debate” Making Things Public (208-217)
Noortje Marres, Richard Rogers, “Recipe for tracing the fate of issues and their publics on the web” Making Things Public (922-933)
Keywords:

Feb 4  Part II: Engaging Technology: Scientific Information Movement
Technology and Critical Theory
Andrew Feenberg, “The bias of technology” Transforming Technology, 63-88.
Technology and Oppositional Science
Egan, “Introduction: the new apparatus”; “In the thunderclap’s wake” Barry Commoner 1-46.
Kirsch, “Geographies of Authority: Livermore, Cape Thompson, Area 10” Proving Grounds (Rutgers University Press, 2005), 78-118

Feb 11  Rights to Knowledge
• Egan, “Guarding the public” Barry Commoner, 47-78.

**Feb 18**

Interventions – rethinking scientific information movements
- Beck, “Relations of definition as relations of domination” *World at Risk*, 24-46
- case studies*

**Feb 25**

NO CLASS [ASEH MEETING]

**Mar 4**

**Part III: Workshop**

Methods I – Archive

Projects

**Mar 11**

NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

**Mar 18**

Methods II – Ethnography

Representational strategies: mapping and counter-mapping
- Case studies: mapping and open source*
- 3Cs, Disorientation Guide. [http://www.countercartographies.org/](http://www.countercartographies.org/)

**Mar 25**

NO CLASS (AAG MEETINGS) (Yucca Mt. visit*)

**Apr 1**

**Part IV: Futures**

Water
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Energy and Environment</td>
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<td>Wiebe E. Bijker, “The politics of water. A Dutch thing to keep the water out or not. Making Things Public, 512-529</td>
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<td>Jean-Pierre Le Bourhis, Water parliaments: some examples Making Things Public 482-485</td>
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<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Rethinking the State? Technology and Democracy redux</td>
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<td>Beck, “Dialectics of Modernity: How the Crises of Modernity Follow from the Triumphs of Modernity, World at Risk</td>
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<td>Apr 22</td>
<td>Mappings Project Presentations</td>
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* ‘probably’, ‘additional information coming’ or ‘to be announced’